

The Hingham Conservation Commission and the Hingham Harbormaster wish to point out, seasonal floats and ramps are not to be stored on any salt marsh, mudflat, coastal beach, or coastal bank due to the negative impacts that floats have on these areas.

The State Division of Marine Fisheries reiterated that no float or float ramps should be stored on any salt marsh or coastal resource areas. This is state regulation under Mass. General Law chapter 131 s. 40, 'The Wetlands Protection Act.' Salt marsh is determined to be significant to the protection of marine fisheries, the protection of groundwater supply, the prevention of pollution, and to the prevention of stormwater damage. When seasonal floats are placed on salt marsh they damage the integrity of the salt marsh and underlying peat.

Examples of the damage caused by placing floats on a salt marsh include:

- A loss of salt marsh grass productivity and a reduction in the density of salt marsh grass caused by the float prohibiting the sunlight from penetrating to the salt marsh grass that is beneath the float.
- A change to the uniform tidal flow moving in and out of the marsh. This happens through the formation of small currents around the base of the float. The result is erosion occurring where the float sits. It is important to understand that a change in the tidal flow around the float could also result in an accumulation of sediment around the edges of the float, once again reducing the productivity of the marsh grass by covering it.
- Damage to the root structure and the inter-connected rhizomes of the salt marsh grass that hold the grass and the peat in place. The weight of the float compresses the underlying peat causing the damage.

The Division of Marine Fisheries is empowered through the MA Wetland Protection Act. This regulation, 310 CMR 10.32(3) states "a proposed project in a salt marsh, on lands within 100 feet of a salt marsh, or in a body of water adjacent to a salt marsh shall not destroy any portion of the salt marsh and shall not have an adverse effect on the productivity of the salt marsh. Alterations in growth, distribution and composition of the salt marsh vegetation shall be considered in evaluation adverse effects on productivity..."

We ask for your cooperation in protecting Hingham's coastal resources by storing your float and ramp in an upland area. Please call either office if you have any concerns or questions.

Cliff Prentiss  
Conservation Officer

John Souther  
Harbormaster